



Mercury Recycling

Michigan Options

Mercury (Hg) is a serious pollutant of concern. When spilled or improperly disposed, mercury is released to the air or collected in water bodies where it can contaminate fish caught by area children and families. Since 1988, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has issued a state-wide fish consumption advisory for all the state's 11,000 lakes due to mercury contamination. See the MDCH mercury Web site, www.michigan.gov/mercury for more information on the health effects of mercury or how to report and clean up a spill.

Even small amounts of mercury that are recycled can have an impact in protecting our environment and health. There are several collection programs available. Many of these programs are free as a result of funding from industry and local, state or federal governments. Details are below. If you need additional help recycling mercury, contact the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Environmental Assistance Center (EAC) at 1-800-662-9278 or deq-assist@michigan.gov or your local recycling contact listed at: www.michigan.gov/wasterecycling.

- **FREE** [Local Collection Sites](#)
- **FREE** [Recycling CFLs, Auto Switches and Thermostats](#)
- [Mercury Recyclers – Commercial sites and Mail-in programs](#) – at cost
- [Waste Disposal Laws](#)

FREE – LOCAL MERCURY COLLECTION SITES:

These sites accept most mercury containing items, but **none** of them accept mercury spill clean up debris. Please, before moving any mercury item, call the location or program contact and confirm they accept your mercury items and amounts and if they have packaging requirements.

1. Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections
Refer to the map of these sites, www.michigan.gov/wasterecycling to find your local program. Most sites accept mercury from farms, schools, and local governmental units. Some sites accept mercury from small businesses, but some do not. Please call to confirm what is accepted.
2. Clean Sweep Collections – these are typically the area HHW collection.
A list of the sites is available at: www.michigan.gov/cleansweep. The difference between Clean Sweep and HHW is that HHW collections are supported through local funding only. Because of limited funding, HHW collections generally refuse to accept mercury or any waste from outside their jurisdiction. Clean Sweep sites are funded by the state and therefore accept mercury from farms, schools, and local governmental units from any location in Michigan. Some Clean Sweep sites accept mercury from small businesses, but some do not. Please call to confirm what is accepted.

FREE – RECYCLING CFLs, Auto Switches and Thermostats:

a. CFLs – Compact Fluorescent Lamps (twist lights)

There are several options for recycling CFLs.

1. Local retail stores – Several local retail stores accept and recycle CFLs. These include: ACE Hardware, Batteries Plus, Home Depot, Lowes, Truevalue Hardware, and others.
2. HHW collections – Some local mercury collections accept CFLs. These are listed at: www.michigan.gov/degreyclingcontacts.
3. Clean Sweep sites – where present, these are also the area HHW sites.
4. Utilities – Check your local utility company for a CFL recycling program.
5. Map – Michigan Energy Options maintains a map of local sites that accept CFLs for recycling. The map is available at: <http://michiganenergyoptions.org/component/content/article/34-programs/311-cfl-recycling-map>.
6. Mail in programs – There are several CFL mail in recycling programs. These are not free. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a list www.epa.gov/cfl/cflrecycling.html of these programs.

b. Switches -Automotive

In 2006, the automotive manufacturers created the “End of Life Solutions” Corporation (ELVS) that recycles auto switches. Information on how to identify which vehicles contain mercury switches is available at: www.elvsolutions.org. Select “Mercury Switches”, then “Educational Materials” tab at the top. Recyclers register and order their first recycling buckets through ELVS. Collected switches are recycled through the Environmental Quality Company (EQ), the program contractor. Information on EQ is available at: www.eqonline.com/services/elvs-mercury-switch-recovery-program.asp. About ten days before mailing buckets of switches for recycling, collection sites should request a free replacement bucket, from: elvsbuckets@eqonline.com to continue collections.

c. Thermostats

The MDEQ partnered with Michigan Energy Options (MEO) and the Thermostat Recycling Corporation, to develop a statewide thermostat recycling program. Information on thermostat recycling is available on the MEO Web site: www.michiganenergyoptions.org, open “Programs & Services”, then “Thermostats”. Under this program, Michigan HVAC contractors, distributors and other companies, or local recycling groups, can obtain a bucket for collecting and recycling mercury thermostats for free. (Note: When the grant ends, September 1, 2013, there will be a registration cost of \$25 to join the program, but the recycling will remain free.) This program only accepts mercury furnace thermostats found on walls. It does not accept thermostats from inside appliances that are used to control gas flow and any other mercury containing items. (Note: It may seem a waste, but please keep the thermostats whole, including the cover, when recycling. This will prevent mercury spills. Do NOT remove the glass ampule of mercury from the thermostat.)

MERCURY RECYCLERS – COMMERCIAL SITES and MAIL-IN PROGRAMS

The following facilities accept mercury for recycling, but there is typically a charge. Many provide a prepaid recycling pack that can be mailed. Do not take, mail, or ship any mercury items to these facilities without getting their permission first. Mercury is considered a hazardous material and must be handled carefully. Please note that this list may not be all inclusive and does not imply any endorsement by any governmental agency or unit.

Michigan Facilities:

This list is not all inclusive. Licensed hazardous waste haulers may be able to assist.

Arch Environmental Group
www.archenvgroup.com
248-426-0165

EQ
www.eqonline.com
800-592-5489

Chemical Analytics
www.cailabpacks.com/UniversalWastes.html
734-326-9400

SQS –Environmental Recycling Group
www.callerg.com
734-459-3800

Drug & Lab Disposal
www.dld-inc.com
269-685-9825

Out of State:

Advanced Environmental Recycling Company
www.aercRecycling.com
610-797-7608

LEI Mercury recycling
www.leirecycle.com
800-309-9908

Bethlehem Apparatus Company
www.bethlehemapparatus.com
610-838-7034

Mercury Waste Solutions
www.mwsi.com
800-741-3343

Chemwise
www.chemwise.org
419-425-3604

Veolia ES Technical Solutions
www.Veoliaes.ts.com
630-218-1763

WASTE DISPOSAL LAWS

Recycling of mercury items is encouraged. CFLs from households can be placed into the trash if no recycling option is available. CFLs placed in the trash, should be bagged to avoid the release of mercury if broken or injuring those handling the trash. Generally the best option for businesses, governments, and institutions with mercury containing waste is to manage it under the streamlined universal waste standards for handling common hazardous waste types. Further information is available in the MDEQ [Universal Waste Guidance](#) publication, or contact the EAC at: 1-800-662-9278 or deq-assist@michigan.gov.